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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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Dear Mrs. Feehan:

I refer to your letter of January 14 addressed to former Secretary Muskie, and your letter of January 21 addressed to Secretary Vance concerning the [illegible] of Mr. John T. Sullivan. I understand that Mr. Ian Mead of your staff has been in regular contact with the Department's Citizens Emergency Center concerning Mr. Sullivan's detainment and that you are already aware of most of the developments in this case. Nevertheless, I shall recapitulate what action has been taken to date in our efforts to locate Mr. Sullivan and I shall try and answer those questions posed in your letter.

As you know, Mr. Sullivan traveled to El Salvador on December 27, 1980, on board TACA airlines and checked into the San Salvador Sheraton Hotel the same day. The Embassy first became aware of the possible disappearance of Mr. Sullivan late Sunday night, January 4, when the Sheraton Hotel Manager, Mr. Peter Sunad, requested Colonel Boyd, the Embassy's Defense Attache who was residing at that time in the hotel, to go to Mr. Sullivan's room to look at his effects. A hotel maid had already alerted Mr. Sunad to the fact that Mr. Sullivan had not been using his room. After unsuccessfully [illegible] Mr. Sullivan's room, Colonel Boyd telephoned Mr. Edward Lane, Embassy's Public Affairs Officer, at his home to see if he knew anything about Mr. Sullivan. At that point Mr. Lane left his home and met Colonel Boyd at the Sheraton. [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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On the morning of January [illegible], the Public Affairs Officer advised the Consular Section of the Embassy of Mr. Sullivan's presumed disappearance. The Consular Section immediately initiated and enabled a full-time duty officer located in the Department of State on a 24-hour basis. Mrs. Sullivan, that evening, [illegible] Mrs. Sullivan finally had any knowledge of Mr. [illegible] Mrs. Sullivan, [illegible] about him so as to assist us in our efforts to [illegible] through the Salvadoran authorities.

To date, the Embassy and the Salvadoran authorities have made extensive efforts to try and locate Mr. Sullivan. Six Embassy personnel have made local [illegible] and have interviewed host personnel, hotel owners, [illegible] media representatives, [illegible] and numerous [illegible]. In addition, there has been extensive local radio coverage in the Salvador, including the publication of Mr. Sullivan's picture and description, as well as radio and television announcements asking for information about him. To date all our efforts to locate him have been unsuccessful.

The Embassy has also been in contact at the highest levels with the Salvadoran Government and repeatedly stressed to the case of Mr. Sullivan. The President of El Salvador personally assured our Ambassador that Mr. Sullivan is [illegible] held by the Salvadoran authorities and that every effort [illegible] have to determine his whereabouts and to bring [illegible] a matter also to the highest level [illegible].

It is my understanding that the Sullivan family has [illegible] that the [illegible]

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You asked the question as to what alternative might be available to avoid a total reliance on Salvadoran authorities in this matter as Mr. Sullivan's wife is an American citizen. While it is true that our Legation in El Salvador does not have the authority nor the manpower to conduct separate investigation in cases such as this, we do press for full investigation by the host government which has not only the authority but the responsibility and normal resources to investigate such cases. We, of course, provide these authorities with whatever information we are able to gather on the individual and the circumstances of his/her disappearance. There have been cases similar to this in the past where the family or friends have opted to hire the services of a private investigator. I am not certain, given the present circumstances in El Salvador, that this avenue would be either advisable or productive. Should the family wish to consider this alternative we will be happy to have the Embassy reconsider whether this is a feasible course of action and, if so, how best to carry it out.

I hope the above information adequately answers your questions about the efforts our Embassy has taken here and that this information will be helpful to you in your dealings with the Sullivan family.

Sincerely,

Walter J. Cutler
Acting Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

bcc: S/S-O-HMorris

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Amy -- concurred

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